

Renzo Novatore

The Expropriator

November 26th, 1919

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For Nikolina

My freedom and my rights
As much as my capacity of power
Even the felicity and greatness
I have only in the measure of my strength!
(From a book I have written that will never see the light)

The expropriator is the most beautiful figure, male, unscrupulous, and virile that I have ever found in anarchism. He is the one who has nought to attend to. He is the one who has no altar on which to sacrifice himself. He glorifies only Life with the philosophy of Action. I met him in a distant midday in August while the sun embroidered in gold the giant green nature, perfumed and festive, singing playful songs of pagan beauty.

He said, "I was always a restless spirit, vagabond and rebellious. I have studied people and their souls in books and in reality. I have found a mixture of comedian, of plebeian, of villain. I was nauseated. From one part the sinister moral phantoms, created by the lies and by the hypocrisy that dominate. From the other part the sacrificial beasts that adore with fanaticism and cowardice. This is the world of men. This is humanity. To this world, for these men and this humanity, I feel repugnance.

Plebeian and bourgeois are equivalent. They deserve each other. Socialism is not of this opinion. He had made the discovery of good and evil. And to destroy these two antagonisms he created another two phantoms: *Equality and Fraternity* among men. . .

"But people will be equal before the state and free in Socialism . . . He — socialism — Has denied the Force, the Youth, the War! But when the bourgeoisie, who are the peasants of the spirit, don't will to be the same as plebeians, who are peasants of the flesh, then socialism admits, whining, war. Yes, even socialism admits homicide and expropriation. But in the name of an ideal of equality and of human brotherhood. . . Of that holy equality and brotherhood that commenced from Cain & Abel! . . .

"But with Socialism you think to half; you are half free; you are half alive! . . . Socialism is intolerance, is impotence of living, is the faith of fear. I'm going beyond!

"The Socialists have found good the equality, and bad the inequality. Good the servants and bad the tyrants. I crossed the threshold of good and evil in order to live my life intensely. I live today and can not await tomorrow. The wait is of peoples and of humanity, so could not be my affair. The future is the mask of fear. The courage and strength have no future for the simple fact that they themselves are the future that revolts on the past and destroys it.

"The purity of life proceeds only with the nobility of courage that is the philosophy of action."

I observed: "The purity of this your life seems to me to border on crime!"

He said: "Crime is the supreme synthesis of liberty and life. The world is the moral world of phantoms. There are spectres and shadows of spectres, there is the Ideal, Universal Love, the Future. Here is the shadow of the spectre: here is ignorance, fear, cowardice. Deep darkness. Perhaps eternal darkness. Even I had lived, one day, in that bleak and lurid prison.

Then I was armed with a sacrilegious torch to ignite the ghosts and violate the night. When I arrived at the rusty gates of good and evil I have I have

furiously toppled them I have crossed the threshold. The bourgeoisie I have thrown his moral anathema and plebeian idiot his moral curse.

“But the one and the other are humanity. I am a man. Humanity is my enemy. It wants to tighten me around its thousand horrendous tentacles. I try to tear from it all which my desires need. We are at war! Everything I have the force to wrest is mine.

And all that which is mine I sacrifice upon the altar of my freedom and my life.

Of this my life that I feel palpitate among the palpitating flames I burst in the heart; Among this savage torture of all my being that I inflate the soul of divine storms, and that makes me echo in the spirit of thunderous fanfare of war and polyphonic symphonies of a superior love, strange and unknown, that I (empie¹) the veins of a blood lush and vigorous, that spreads in all the wrapping of my muscles, of my nerves and of my flesh, quivering diabolically with rejoicing expansion; of this my life of which I glimpse through the vision crowd of my fantastic dreams, eager and needful of of perennial development.

My motto is: walk expropriating and igniting, always leaving behind me howls of moral offenses and smoking trunks of old things.

When men possess no more ethical wealth truly unique real inviolable treasures then I will throw out my lock-picks. When in the world there will be no more phantoms, then I will throw out my torch. But this future is distant and might never be! And I am a son of this distant future, sealed in lead on this world by *Chance* to where I bow to power.” So said to me the Expropriator in that distant midday in August while the sun embroidered in gold the giant green nature, fragrant and festive, singing songs of joyful pagan beauty.

¹empie — to make impious.

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October 17, 2009



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Author: Renzo Novatore
Title: The Expropriator
Publication date: November 26th, 1919

Renzo, Novatore (1919). The Expropriator. *Iconoclasta!*, aI, 1s, 10.
L'Iconoclasta was from Pistoia, Italy. Translated in 2009 by Luther Blissett [copyleft]